

Changes in the States: Oregon Court Upholds Gift Laws; Legislature Makes Some Gift Law Changes

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On the last day of 2009, the Oregon Supreme Court unanimously upheld Oregon's \$50 limit applicable to persons with certain legislative or administrative interests in government action, including lobbyists. This opinion can be found at www.publications.ojd.state.or.us/S057570.htm/.

Separate from the court decision, the Oregon legislature amended the state's conflict of interest and gift laws in 2009 in response, in part, to mass resignations by local government officials. These changes became effective on January 1, 2010.

Among other things, the amended law clarifies that a legislative or administrative interest pertains to a vote or decision by a specific official or employee and not those of the agency generally. Legislative and administrative interests are important, as they are the basis of several gift rules and other conflict of interest provisions. The amended law also eliminates the wholesale ban on the provision of entertainment to government officials and, instead, places entertainment under the other state gift laws.

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